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CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

William G. Willcox

President of the Board of Education

AND

William H. Maxwell

Superintendent of Schools

REGARDING THE DUPLICATE SCHOOL PLAN

Department of Education
City of New York
August 1917

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

25th May, 1917

Dear Mr. Willcox:

You may be interested in the enclosed copy of a letter which I am today forwarding to Governor Whitman.

Respectfully yours,

Wm. H. Maxwell,

City Superintendent of Schools.

Hon. William G. Willcox,
President of the Board of Education.

25th May, 1917

Hon. Charles S. Whitman,
Governor of The State of New York.

Dear Sir:

After mature consideration, I have reached the conclusion that it is my duty to ask you to veto Senate bill Int. No. 491—the bill prepared by the State Department of Education to provide a general law, under which the educational systems of the cities of our State may be administered.

Notwithstanding what I believe to be the urgent necessity for a judicious revision and codification of our many city charter enactments regarding public education, I had at one time determined to oppose this measure before the Committees on Education of the Senate and Assembly, because of its grave defects. I was induced to refrain from such opposition on the plea that, by a few clauses inserted in the final revision of the bill, it would remove what is probably the most serious impediment to the progress of public education in The City of New York—the subjection of the Board of Education to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. On a careful examination of these clauses,

however, I find that, in the all-important matters of supplying funds for the erection of school buildings and the purchase of school sites, the subjection of the educational to the financial authorities of the city continues. That this subjection has been a great evil, is only too completely demonstrated by the fact that the financial authorities have forced the educational authorities to introduce, without adequate preparation and without thorough adaptation to city needs, a plan of school-keeping devised in Gary, Indiana. There are in this plan some features which, if wisely guarded, would be of great service to our schools; but, forced upon us as they have been, without due consideration and without adequate preparation, they have worked incalculable injury to the schools and to the children of this city.

The means by which this feat was accomplished was the simple but effective device of refusing money for the construction, extension, or improvement of any school building unless it was to be operated on the Gary school plan. The opposition of the great mass of the people upon whom the Gary plan has been inflicted is the most intense and widespread I have ever known in my long experience, toward any educational policy. The measure which is now before you for approval or disapproval, leaves unimpaired the tyrannical power of the City Board of Estimate and Apportionment to control the school policy to be followed in any building for the erection of which it grants the money, and fastens the facilities for this political abuse of power indefinitely on New York City.

I have said enough to show you that Senate bill Int. No. 491 should not become a law.

There are other objections, however, to the measure, almost equally potent, which may be briefly stated as follows:

1. It not only perpetuates but extends and intensifies the second great evil from which the New York schools are suffering, namely, administering the educational policies of the Board of Education through a debating society—the

Board of Superintendents—which produces hesitancy where firmness is required and fickleness where consistency is required, and which very thoroughly prevents the fixing of responsibility for such evils as the retention of inefficient teachers, advancement in salary for those who have not earned it by efficient service, and, especially by the injudicious selection, as the result of compromises between opposing opinions, of men and women for high positions such as those of District Superintendent and High School Principal. The difficulty is not that the selections are always bad, but that they are not always the best that might have been made.

2. The language of the statute is loosely and carelessly constructed. The inevitable result will be protracted and vexatious litigation, from which the New York City schools have already suffered severely.

The educational chapter of the New York Charter is far from being a perfect instrument, but it has been interpreted by the courts and its meaning settled, and consequently is very much superior to the proposed law.

For these sufficient reasons, while I heartily believe in having our city school systems administered under a general law that shall be simple, wise, and unambiguous, I ask you to veto Senate bill Int. No. 491.

With all respect, Sir, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Wm. H. Maxwell,

City Superintendent of Schools.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

June 1st, 1917

Dr. William H. Maxwell,
City Superintendent of Schools,
New York City.
Dear Dr. Maxwell:

I thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Governor Whitman urging him to veto the State Educational Bill. I am glad that you decided to take this action, although I do not entirely agree with your reasons for doing so.

I am quite in accord with your view that a Board of Superintendents is a bad form of organization (except that I am somewhat inclined to question whether any independent statutory powers granted by the Legislature may not be more safely entrusted to a group than to an individual), but I do not agree with you that the Board of Education should be financially independent of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, under the present organization of our municipal government. So long as the city administration is responsible to the tax payers for the total city budget, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment must have control over the entire expenditures of the city, and must exercise its judgment in passing upon the relative importance of the financial needs of all departments of civic activity and the ability of the city treasury to meet such demands. Unless the electorate is ready to establish a wholly independent branch of city government, such as would be represented by a Board of Education elected by the people and entrusted with a separate taxing power, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, I believe, should retain the authority as well as the responsibility for determining the amount of expenditures for educational purposes.

I wish to disabuse your mind, however, of any impression that the duplicate organization of elementary schools has been adopted wholly or mainly as a measure of economy. While members of the Board of Education have been impressed with the conviction that the traditional method of using the school plant is too extravagant for the financial resources of the city, and that the only practicable and comprehensive method of dealing with the part time problem lies in a more intensive use of the school buildings and equipment, they have been equally impressed with the belief that this form of organization is a very important improvement from an educational standpoint which should be introduced as a means of providing better schools for the children.

This view is the result of the independent study and observation of the individual members of the Board, and their judgment appears to be justified by the effect of the duplicate organization in the schools in which it has had a fair trial. Naturally any such change meets opposition at the outset, especially during the inconvenience due to incomplete adjustment of building and equipment to the new organization, but I have yet to find a principal who has tried the plan for six months who is not enthusiastically in favor of it.

I have not time now to discuss this matter further, but I do wish you to know that even if the Board of Education had complete financial independence and unlimited funds, it would nevertheless favor the extension of the duplicate organization of the elementary schools, since a majority of the members of the Board thoroughly believe in it from a purely educational standpoint.

Very truly yours,

William G. Willcox,

President of the Board of Education.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

4th June, 1917

Dear Mr. Willcox:

I have your letter of 1st June, with regard to my letter to Governor Whitman, urging him to veto the State education bill, and with regard to the duplicate organization of elementary schools.

In reply I beg leave to say that, upon the question of the financial independence of the Board of Education, you seem to ignore the practically universal experience of the cities of the United States. Progress in education everywhere has gone hand in hand with the independence of the educational authorities. It is one of the axioms of school administration that the educational power should be separate and distinct from the political power in a municipality. If you have any doubt on this subject, I would ask you to examine results in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and, in our State, in Rochester, since financial independence was granted the educational authorities.

I regret to see that you ignore entirely the results of professional investigation of the duplicate school plan, both in high schools and in elementary schools. Wherever it has been tried the scholarship of the pupils has been steadily impaired. The running expenses are very considerably larger than in schools organized on the old plan. Pupils do not remain as long in school. As to scholarship, the tests conducted by my direction by Mr. Buckingham demonstrated the impairment of scholarship. Subsequent tests, made since that time by a committee of District Superintendents acting quite independently,—proved the validity of the Buckingham report in every particular.

With regard to high schools, if you will make a study of the results of the State examinations, you will find that, as each high school has become enlarged so as to have two separate

schools in one building, the results of the examinations show steady deterioration in scholarship.

It may be that we are doomed to endure the duplicate school plan for a considerable time longer. It may be that we must even suffer a still greater extension of the plan than is found today. At any rate, however, an attempt should at least be made to minimize its bad effects. This may be done to some extent by not permitting the organization of the duplicate school plan in any building that is not adequately prepared for it and for which a proper organization of the teaching force has not been made.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. MAXWELL,

City Superintendent of Schools.

HON. WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,

President of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

June 20th, 1917

Dr. William H. Maxwell,
City Superintendent of Schools,
New York.

Dear Sir:

Other pressing demands upon my time have prevented an earlier reply to your letter of the 4th instant, with reference to your communication to Governor Whitman urging him to veto the State Educational Bill. In the meantime the bill has become a law, and there is little to be gained by the discussion of its provisions, whether we like them or not we must make the best of them.

I should be willing and glad to see a competent Board of Education entrusted with financial independence, but in that case the Board of Estimate and Apportionment should be relieved of all responsibility for educational expenditures, the Board of Education being responsible directly to the tax payers. I do not think it fair or wise that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment while charged, as it now is, with responsibility for the entire city budget should be deprived of supervision and control over any portion of the expenditures.

In regard to the duplicate school plan, it is quite too early, I think, to determine the results of this form of organization in its effect upon scholarship in academic subjects. The advocates of the plan claim that the interest of the pupils in all branches of school work is stimulated and quickened and that the scholarship in academic subjects is thereby improved; while those who oppose the duplicate form of organization claim that the academic scholarship is impaired. Both claims, I believe, are equally questionable and premature. As the time allotted to academic

subjects under the duplicate plan of organization is certainly no less and in most cases somewhat greater than the time allotted under the old plan, it seems hardly probable that the results in such academic subjects will be materially affected, but I do not anticipate that the plan can be successfully defended or opposed on the strength of such results.

From an educational standpoint, the most important feature of the duplicate organization is the time and advantages afforded to pupils for the training of the senses, observation, imagination, manual dexterity and individual initiative and for the well rounded development of all the powers and faculties of the child.

Dr. Eliot says "The changes which ought to be made immediately in the programmes of American secondary schools in order to correct the glaring deficiencies of the present programmes, are chiefly:—the introduction of more hand, ear, and eye work—such as drawing, carpentry, turning, music, sewing and cooking and the giving of much more time to the sciences of observation".

If this is true of the secondary schools, it is doubly true of the elementary schools. You yourself must certainly agree with other progressive educators in regard to the value and importance of such extension of public school education. Indeed the importance of such advantages is so generally conceded that no one today would think of recommending the construction of any new school building without a playground, gymnasium, auditorium, domestic science room, work shops and science laboratories. When I asked the Board of Superintendents a year ago if they did not consider a duplicate school with these advantages a better school for the children, than a single session school without such advantages, there was not a dissenting voice in their affirmative answer.

Disregarding for the moment all motives of economy, and even all the evils of part time and double sessions, and looking at the problem solely from the point of view of the best educational advantages for the children, is it not true that every

school if possible should have a playground, a gymnasium, an auditorium, work shops, cooking kitchen and science laboratories, and is it not equally true that every pupil in the school should have the benefit of these advantages? And if this be conceded, must we then confine these advantages to comparatively few new buildings, or shall we try to extend them also to the vast number of children who must continue to use the hundreds of old buildings in the city?

The duplicate plan of organization was introduced and is being extended as a practicable method of supplying in some degree at least, throughout the school system, these advantages and opportunities which are so generally recognized as essential for the best welfare of the children. It would be financially impossible to provide these advantages without such organization as should admit of their constant use throughout the school day, but with such organization, and with the school day lengthened to six hours, it is possible to eliminate part time and give every child the benefit of a full six hour day including these advantages, in addition to the usual amount of academic work.

I quite agree with you that the running expenses under this plan may be larger than under the old plan of organization, but I am confident that any such increase will be amply justified in increased benefit to the school children. I also agree with you that the high school situation is serious and urgently demands consideration and action, but thus far we have proceeded upon the theory that the claims of the elementary schools should take precedence.

I am writing at length in the hope of disabusing your mind of any impression that the Board of Education is introducing the duplicate organization as a makeshift measure of economy. No such plan could have secured the approval of the Board if the members had not sincerely believed that it would also mean better schools for the children and thus far the results have

served only to confirm and strengthen this conviction. Of course, a school should not be reorganized on the duplicate plan until the building and equipment are reasonably prepared for it nor until proper organization of the teaching force has been arranged, and I shall welcome your cooperation in this respect.

The theory of the duplicate plan I believe to be sound and in accord with the most progressive educational ideas, but its application to old buildings in congested sections of the city naturally presents many difficult problems. During the transition period there must necessarily be more or less friction and dissatisfaction, but I have yet to find a principal who has tried the plan for six months, who is not enthusiastically in favor of it. May I not hope that we shall now have the benefit of your cooperation and counsel in minimizing any disadvantages or difficulties in future?

Under separate cover, I am sending you a copy of Dr. Eliot's "Changes Needed in American Secondary Education". If you have not already read it I am sure you will enjoy reading it. I believe most thoroughly in the principles of education which he so forcibly expounds, and I am sure that you will share my hope that we may live to see these principles generally applied throughout the public schools of New York until the advantages and opportunities which he demands shall be extended to every pupil in the city.

Very truly yours,

William G. Willcox,

President of the Board of Education.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

27th June, 1917

DEAR PRESIDENT WILLCOX:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 20th June, with regard to the duplicate school plan, together with a copy of President Eliot's pamphlet on "Changes Needed in American Secondary Education."

You quote Dr. Eliot as saying: "Changes which ought to be made immediately in the programs of American secondary schools, in order to correct any deficiencies in the present programs, are chiefly:—the introduction of more hand, ear, and eye work, such as drawing, carpentry, wood-turning, music, sewing, and cooking, and the giving of much more time to the sciences of observation." To this you add: "If this is true of the secondary schools, it is doubly true of the elementary schools."

Under your language the assumption seems to lie that I, as Superintendent of Schools, have not been fully in accord with President Eliot's dictum, and that I have been remiss in urging the teaching of hand and eye work and the "sciences of observation." You will permit me to say that, had you made a more careful study of the history of the New York schools during the last thirty years, you would not have made this assumption. Years and years before Dr. Eliot started on his campaign to secure the giving of more time and attention to hand and eye work and the "sciences of observation" in secondary schools; years before he made his celebrated report as Chairman of the "Committee of Ten", in which there is scarcely any mention of manual training in secondary schools, I made a fight in Brooklyn to secure the establishment of the first manual training high school in Greater New York,—a school in which "drawing, carpentry, turning, music, sewing, and cooking" and "chemistry, physics, and biology" were taught from the start. When I

commenced that fight, I had the support of but one member of the Board of Education. It took three years to induce the Brooklyn Board of Education to give a majority in favor of establishing a manual training high school. It took three years more to obtain from the Board of Estimate and Apportionment a very small amount of money to make a beginning in the work. For a quarter of a century and more I have had to bear the brunt of the contest made by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, at first of Brooklyn and then of Greater New York, and of many outside bodies, against the effort to secure manual training in the elementary and high schools and some teaching of the "sciences of observation." When Comptroller Grout was in office and a member of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, he led an attack in that body on what he was pleased to call the "fads and frills of the public schools that have been introduced by Superintendent Maxwell." For months I was obliged to make many public addresses and conduct many controversies in the press and in the Board of Education, to prevent the expulsion of the so-called "fads and frills" from the public schools.

This public discussion served to win for me the support of many public spirited men and women in this community and in the country generally, with the result that the appropriations of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment yearly became more generous for the maintenance and extension of those activities in our schools which are now held up as the distinctive and desirable features of the duplicate school plan. For years past, in all elementary schools whose structures admitted of the necessary changes without great expense and within the limits of the appropriations made, there have been introduced kitchens, gymnasiums, workshops, playgrounds, baths, and, even in not a few instances, laboratories and auditoriums. You will see, then, that I cannot possibly be opposed to the extension of facilities for these studies in either elementary or high schools.

What I object to, in the campaign for the establishment of the duplicate school plan, may be summarized briefly as follows:

1. The rapid extension of the plan to all schools, wherever possible, before the merits of the plan have been thoroughly tested:

2. The utilization of public funds for structural changes in old buildings in old sections of the city, and of more funds for the purchase of the additional equipment required for the "new" activities, while sections of the population are without even a half-measure of school facilities under either the traditional plan or the new duplicate plan.

3. The persistent urging, in support of the duplicate school plan, of arguments that assume as established facts, matters still undetermined. An instance of this occurs in your letter. While, on pages 1 and 2 you say: "It is quite too early, I think, to determine the results of this form of organization in its effect upon scholarship in academic subjects," on page 4 you say: "With such organization, and with the school day lengthened to six hours, it is possible to eliminate part-time and give every child the benefit of a full six-hour day, including these advantages, in addition to the usual amount of academic work," and again, on pages 4 and 5, you say: "No such plan could have secured the approval of the Board if the members had not sincerely believed that it would also mean better schools for the children and *thus far the results have served only to confirm and strengthen this conviction.*"

Another instance in your letter is the assumption that, in the duplicate schools, more time is spent in the academic work and that "in most cases it is somewhat greater than the time allotted under the old plan." I characterize this as an assumption because it is a matter in dispute, involving the question of whether the periods spent in the auditorium and some other periods are to be regarded as time spent in academic work.

I welcome all the facilities that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment will give us, in the shape of playgrounds, labor-

atories, and workshops, as I have always welcomed them; but I do not believe that it is sound public policy to leave the city, in many of its parts, without adequate elementary and high school accommodations.

At various times, various reasons have been urged in support of the duplicate school plan. At first, it was the solution of the problem of vocational education. Next, it was the solution of the problem of congestion. And again, it was the solution of the academic problem. Now its advocates, in their public utterances, urge its educational advantages through "the enrichment of the school curriculum."

The introduction of the duplicate school plan in schools and in districts where there is no present congestion, seems to indicate that the purpose is not to relieve congestion. On the other hand, the introduction of the duplicate school plan into many schools that have previously had such facilities as auditoriums, gymnasiums, science laboratories, kitchens, workshops, and playgrounds, seems to show that the purpose is not solely to enrich the curriculum. The plan seems to be the thing, whether the advantages claimed for it can accrue or not.

Any school or system of schools or any method of teaching is to be judged, not by the criterion which you lay down, namely, the amount of time devoted to a given subject or the application of any specific method, but by the results in cultivating concentration of attention, accurate observation, just reasoning, and luminous expression.

The extension of the duplicate school plan has been prosecuted with such vigor and persistence as to justify the belief that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and the Board of Education intend to commit the city permanently to the adoption of the plan, by establishing it so firmly and investing in it so much money, that no future administration can displace it without a great disturbance to the school system, without a loss of the

heavy investment already made, and without a heavier new investment.

I believe that the duplicate school plan should not be further extended until its merits have been proved, and that, in the meantime, such public funds as can be spared for school purposes, should be directed to providing additional accommodations in the elementary and high schools, where needed.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. MAXWELL,

Superintendent of Schools.

HON. WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,

President of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

June 28th, 1917

DR. WILLIAM H. MAXWELL,
City Superintendent of Schools,
New York.

MY DEAR DR. MAXWELL:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 27th instant with reference to the duplicate school plan.

I did not intend, in my letter of the 20th, to imply that you had not been in accord with Dr. Eliot's views or that you had been remiss as Superintendent of Schools in urging the teaching of hand and eye work and the "sciences of observation." On the contrary, it was because I assumed that you were in full agreement with Dr. Eliot regarding the importance of such extension of educational opportunities as he advocates, that I ventured to point out your inconsistency in opposing a plan, the most important feature of which is the extension of the very facilities and activities which you yourself have advocated for many years past.

Touching briefly upon your objections to the plan I reply:

1. No test is necessary to prove the advantages of workshops, playgrounds, gymnasiums, auditoriums and laboratories.

2. The Board is using public funds to provide additional accommodation and facilities where it finds the need most urgent and where the greatest number of children may enjoy the increased advantages.

3. There is no inconsistency in the paragraphs quoted from my letter. Results measured in percentages in academic subjects (as attempted in the discredited Buckingham report) are premature and untrustworthy, but results meas-

ured by the enthusiastic approval of superintendents who have most closely studied the working of the plan, of principals and teachers who have actually tried it in their schools (few of whom would willingly go back to the old system), of parents who report increased interest on the part of their children, these are the results which have served to strengthen the conviction of the Board that the duplicate plan means better schools for the children.

I sent a copy of my former letter to each member of the Board of Education, because I was to some degree assuming to speak on behalf of the Board and I thought it only proper to give other members of the Board an opportunity to take exception to my statements if they desired to do so. I have not the slightest objection to your sending members of the Board copies of your letter of the 27th instant, as you suggested, and I will also send them copies of this brief reply. I welcome the fullest discussion of the merits of the question. The more they are considered, the more impregnable I believe will the position of the Board of Education be found to be.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,

President of the Board of Education.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

2nd July, 1917

Dear Sir:

I beg leave to make the following comments on your letter of 28th June, in reply to my letter of 27th June, with regard to the duplicate school plan.

The first question which your letter raises is this: Is the Board of Education using public funds to provide additional accommodations and facilities where need is most urgent? You assert that, by making certain additions to old buildings, in order to introduce the duplicate school plan, it is so using money. I submit that the evidence at hand shows that this is not providing accommodations where the need is most urgent. I submit that, to build new elementary and high schools in localities which, in recent years, have increased enormously in population, but which are now almost bare of school accommodations, is incomparably more important than to provide opportunities for duplicating schools in old buildings where there is no great pressure on existing facilities. The financial power of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment is behind your plan. The will of the people, I have reason to believe, will eventually, if it does not already, support my plan.

You claim that the Buckingham report, which showed that the Gary schools were not improving as rapidly as schools organized on the traditional plan or on the prevocational plan, has been "discredited". Discredited by whom? Only by those who are joined to the idols of Gary and who desire to be left alone with their delusions. The following excerpt from a letter written by Professor Edward L. Thorndike, of Teachers College, probably the highest authority in this country on educational statistics and their interpretation, will show you how a scientific thinker views that report:

"With respect to Dr. Buckingham's *Survey of the Gary and Prevocational* Schools, and the criticisms of it which have been made by Mr. Nudd, I am of the opinion that Dr. Buckingham's methods were chosen impartially and on grounds of scientific merit; and that, if the study were repeated on a larger scale and with other reasonable methods of weighting the data and measuring improvement, the results would not differ substantially from those reported by Dr. Buckingham.

One could, of course, devise a great many reasonable methods for measuring improvement and for assigning weights per individual, per class and per school, in combining results in such a comparative study as this. The important thing is to choose your methods without prejudice and before you know their consequences, and then abide by the conclusion. Then, the fact that you can, *ex post facto,* find some justifiable method that accentuates your result, or the fact that a critic can find some justifiable method that minimizes it, is of little importance."

While admitting that the duplicate school plan is still on trial, most inconsistently (I must still claim that you are inconsistent, notwithstanding your disclaimer of inconsistency), you assert that the "enthusiastic approval" of superintendents, principals, and teachers who have tried the plan "strengthens the conviction of the Board that the duplicate plan means better schools for the children." Here I must raise a question as to the accuracy of your statement. After diligent inquiry, I have found but two out of thirty-five superintendents in our city who "enthusiastically approve" the duplicate school plan. The great majority, of whom I am one, regard it as an experiment whose absolute success or absolute failure remains to be demonstrated, though the weight of evidence supports an adverse judgment, or as a makeshift until the requisite money is provided for the necessary new buildings.

As for the principals and teachers, the number of those who "enthusiastically approve" the duplicate school plan is so small

as to be almost undiscoverable, while, of those who are opposed to it, or who are still in doubt, their name is legion.

This, my dear Sir, is an age of scientific measurement. Neither opinion nor enthusiasm can any longer be accepted as justification for educational theory. It will be a sorry day for the public schools, should boards of education, for any appreciable period, permit themselves to be swayed by the sophistries of interested advocates, or by the enthusiasm of those who are carried away by every wind of doctrine, or by the pressure of political authorities.

Respectfully yours,

Wm. H. Maxwell,

Superintendent of Schools.

Hon. William G. Willcox,

President of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

July 9, 1917

Dr. William H. Maxwell,
Superintendent of Schools.

Dear Sir:

I do not know that anything is to be gained by prolonging our correspondence with reference to the duplicate schools. In conclusion, however, I must point out that neither in your letter to Governor Whitman nor in your correspondence with me nor in your statement before the Board of Education, have you produced a single fact or a single definite concrete argument in support of your opposition to the extension of the advantages which the Board of Education is endeavoring to provide for elementary school children throughout the city.

In your letter to Governor Whitman you say "There are in this plan some features which, if wisely guarded, would be of great service to our schools," and in your letter to me of June 27th you explain at much length your own efforts for over a quarter of a century to introduce into the public schools of the city the very advantages which we are now widely extending through the medium of the duplicate schools, and say that you cannot possibly be opposed to the extension of such facilities as kitchens, gymnasiums, workshops, playgrounds, laboratories and auditoriums either in the elementary schools or high schools. So far apparently we are entirely in accord.

While fully appreciating the desirability of these advantages, however, and advocating their extension as far as practicable throughout the school system, you apparently fear that the too rapid extension of such facilities may have a deleterious effect upon the work of the schools in academic subjects. As the time given to such subjects in the duplicate schools, even without the

auditorium period, is fully equal to that under the old form of organization, I can see no serious danger in this direction. I admit it is a point to be watched and guarded in the future administration of the schools, but I cannot admit that the fear of such a result should be allowed to deter or delay the extension of the great advantages which the duplicate plan offers in other directions.

I recall your remark that the results of the Washington Irving High School are "a tragedy," and I assume that you fear similar results in the duplicate schools. I protest, however, that the results achieved by a school should be measured not only in percentages in academic subjects, but also and especially in the character of power, initiative and independence, enthusiasm and inspiration developed in the pupils. Measuring in this way the results of the Washington Irving High School, parents of the pupils and many others who are familiar with the wonderful spirit that inspires that entire organization would, I believe, welcome more such tragedies in our public school system.

As an indication of the effect of the duplicate plan in New York, even under the unfavorable conditions prevailing during adjustment, I enclose extracts from statements of some of the principals of schools in which the plan has been in operation for six months or more.

Let me rehearse briefly the results to be secured by the expenditure of the $12,400,000. appropriated by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment during the past two years:

1st: $6,000,000. is to be expended in the erection of 14 new buildings to accommodate 27,800 children, 7 in Brooklyn, 3 in Queens, 2 in The Bronx, 1 in Manhattan and 1 in Richmond.

2d: Nearly $3,000,000. is to be expended for the erection of additions to existing buildings.

3d: About $1,400,000. is to be expended for additional sites for playgrounds.

4th: About $2,000,000. (less than one-sixth of the entire amount) is to be expended for alterations and equipment of existing buildings, to eliminate dark and unsanitary rooms and to fit these buildings for duplicate school organization.

The $6,400,000. thus to be expended for the improvement of existing schools will provide accommodations for about 58,000 additional pupils, and will at the same time extend the new advantages thus provided to more than 200,000 pupils of these old buildings who would not be reached at all if the entire $12,400,000. were expended for new buildings.

You claim in general terms that in the expenditure of these funds, the Board of Education is providing additional accommodations and advantages in sections where they are not imperatively needed and neglecting the more urgent demands of other sections of the city, but you give no specific instances in support of this criticism. The Board of Education has endeavored to give fair and impartial consideration to needs for further accommodation in order of urgency based upon the number of pupils on part time and double session and the prospective growth. It is estimated that the expenditure of this $12,400,000. will provide accommodation for about 100,000 children heretofore on part time and double session, and also make provision for future growth to the extent of 35,000 more. As soon as the urgent necessities of the elementary school system are thus relieved, the Board of Education and the Board of Estimate and Apportionment will, I believe, be quite prepared to consider and deal with the needs of the high schools, which are only second to those of the elementary schools in urgency and importance.

In this broad comprehensive plan, it is quite possible that some mistakes have been made and will be made, but all of the steps taken by the Board of Education thus far in the expenditure of these funds have, I believe, received the unanimous approval of the Board of Superintendents, and the Board of Superin-

tendents is to have ample opportunity to pass upon the details of the expenditure of the new appropriation in advance of any definite commitments.

Very truly yours,
WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,
President, Board of Education.

Enclosures.

ENCLOSURES.

Brief Extracts From Statements of Principals With Reference to Duplicate School Plan.

1. I wish to continue it next year because of the benefit to the children. They are so much happier, so much more interested and successful in regular work. The teachers like it very much.

2. (On duplicate plan two months). The plan much better for the children. I don't want to go back to the old plan. The chance of moving at the end of the period, giving the children an opportunity to stretch and exercise, is a great advantage. They are fresher in mind and body.

3. (On duplicate plan two months). The new plan offers undoubted advantages to the children.

4. (On duplicate plan two months). Neither teachers nor I would go back to the old line school unless we were ordered. There is no question about the superiority of the system at all points.

5. (On duplicate plan two months). I would not go back to the old plan under any circumstances unless I was

compelled to. The auditorium exercises supply a correlative force we never had before; it utilizes talents of the teachers that are restricted in the classroom. It gives the children the handwork for which they hunger. The playroom is a necessity for City children. I have not heard a word of complaint from a parent. The children are enthusiastic for it.

6. (On duplicate plan for two months). I don't know what the scholastic result will be. It takes three promotions to find out, but if it fell 5% or 10% I should still want the duplicate plan because of the greater giving of happiness to the children, the greater amount of handwork, of play, etc.

7. I would not want to go back to the old scheme. Our parents like the scheme. When they extended my district the new parents came to raise a great row about the Gary system, wanted their children transferred to a non-Gary school, and could not tell what they objected to. They simply would not want to go back now.

8. Children find their aptitudes; are helped to succeed in life. I have been able to advance pupils without the lock step; I have promoted when ready; lots of individual programmes adapted to the needs of the pupils.

9. If I had room to turn around I would prefer the duplicate plan to the old plan; opportunities for special work for children who could not otherwise have it. The children do so much better; they get more shop; the whole scheme seems to be better for the children.

10. Pupils who do well in an ordinary school do much better on the duplicate plan.

11. There are various ways of answering why I think the duplicate plan the best. Private philanthropy is devising improved schools for specially favored children; more freedom, more out-of-door play, swimming, mastery of tools, variety. This plan aims to give to all the children these advantages; is greatly superior to the old line plan, and after four months of it I am heartily in favor of it.

12. This plan is the finest thing for the children that ever happened. They are getting good things they never had before; constructive work.

13. The duplicate plan is undeniably a better thing for the children. It is more businesslike; it is much more productive.

14. Cannot compare the advantages of the old plan with the new. I don't want the old plan ever again.

THE ADAMS PLACE
POMPTON LAKES, NEW JERSEY

July 12, 1917

Hon. William G. Willcox,
President, Board of Education,
New York City.
Dear Sir:

Your letter of July 9 has been forwarded to me at this sanatorium.

You begin by saying: "I do not know that anything is to be gained by prolonging our correspondence with reference to the duplicate schools." At least in this judgment I am almost constrained to agree with you. I entered upon the correspondence in the hope of dispelling from your mind the delusions under which I believed you to be suffering. I use the word "delusions" advisedly. Your reputation as a business man and as a philanthropist stands too high, to permit me to think that you would advocate a measure no matter how unsalutary unless you believed it to be salutary. This last letter of yours, however, proves how vain has been my hope. Nevertheless, in the belief that your innate intelligence and love of truth will one day burst the bonds in which you are now enmeshed, I shall continue to point out your errors and to set forth the truth.

You proceed: "I must point out that neither in your letter to Governor Whitman nor in your correspondence with me nor in your statement before the Board of Education have you produced a single definite concrete argument in support of your opposition to the extension of the advantages which the Board of Education is endeavoring to provide for elementary school children throughout the city." In the first place you will permit me to point out that this sentence is a fine example of that kind of fallacy with which men have been accustomed in all ages to delude themselves and to deceive others—"begging the question"

—assuming in one of the premises of your syllogism the conclusion which you desire to reach. You assume, after admitting as you did in your first letter, that the Gary or duplicate school plan is still on trial or in other words that it is not yet proved to be a good thing, that it has advantages which would be for the benefit of all the children of the city. This is the very point at issue. I, on the other hand, take the ground that these "advantages" are not yet demonstrated, and that until they are demonstrated, and until we see whether we cannot improve upon its present form, this plan should not be extended.

I do not know just what you mean by a "concrete argument" which you say I have not used. Therefore I am unable either to admit or to deny your statement. When, however, you say I have not "produced a single fact," I must take issue with you very sharply. You will permit me to refresh your recollection. I stated that there are three localities in the Bronx so urgently in need of new elementary school accommodations that no amount of "Garyizing" or "duplicating" existing schools will satisfy the demand of the people. Mr. President, is that statement a fact? I stated that school No. 54 in Brooklyn is an old building which should be replaced by a new building on a neighbouring site purchased for that purpose, and that to spend money in Garyizing a new modern building some blocks distant, will not satisfy the just demands of the people who in lieu of something better send their children to No. 54. Mr. President, is that, or is it not, a fact? I stated that P. S. 140, Brooklyn, is now and has always been, a school for girls in a comparatively modern and well equipped and not over crowded building and that to spend money to "Garyize" that school is to divert funds which might be more profitably employed. Mr. President, are these facts or are they not? I stated that our high school accommodations, in proportion to our number of high school students—39,000 sittings for 69,000 students—are less ample than those provided by any other city in the State? Is that a statement of fact, Mr. Presi-

dent? Thrown into syllogistic form, the argument would run thus: The more necessary buildings should be erected before the less necessary; the buildings mentioned above are the more necessary; therefore, they should be erected before the less necessary. Is that what you mean by a concrete argument? I do not know, but I do know that it is a valid syllogism. In disposing of your assertion about a concrete argument I have also disposed of your statement that I have not "produced a single fact in support etc."

In the concourse of your letter you take occasion to comment upon the language I used in a private conversation with yourself. I do not object to your quoting a private conversation nor even to your commenting thereon, though of course as a gentleman you are aware that it is not usual to comment in public—I assume that you will give your letter to the press—on private conversations; but I do object to your quoting me incorrectly. You say, "I recall your remark that the results of the Washington Irving High School are 'a tragedy.'" In so saying you misrepresent me, because what I said referred to the Washington Irving High School under its former management not to the Washington Irving High School under its present principal, Mr. Zabriskie. If I were asked to give a good illustration of how much a strong, conscientious principal can accomplish in a large school in a short time, I should have no hesitation in pointing to the work of Mr. Zabriskie in that school. If you examined the matter closely you would find that "character and power, initiative and independence" have certainly not decreased—they were not strongly in evidence under the former management—while the humbler but all important school virtues of quietness, truthfulness, industry, accuracy, and honesty, have been strongly developed. It is no longer a matter of almost daily occurrence, to have a young woman come to the Superintendent to tell him how her aim in going to high school had been ship-wrecked because the Washington Irving High School did not fulfill the promises it

held out to its pupils. If that school no longer enjoys the melancholy distinction it had attained for several years in being recorded as the high school deserted by the largest number of its students each year before graduating, it is because of the changes wrought by its present principal. In its present condition, were it not for its overcrowding, the school would measurably realize the ideal I had formed when I planned it in 1902.

It shows, however, Mr. President, how hard up you were for an argument when your memory served you this fatal trick of recalling a fragment of a private conversation, and recalling it wrong.

In the absence of official documents from my temporary residence I am unable to comment upon your statement of the objects for which moneys appropriated are to be expended. I shall take an early opportunity, however, of looking into the facts. You say that "all of the steps taken by the Board of Education thus far in the expenditure of these funds have received the unanimous approval of the Board of Superintendents." What the Board of Superintendents may have done during my prolonged absence I cannot either affirm or deny, but I know that the Board of Superintendents was opposed by a large majority to the last report adopted by the Board of Education for expending money for Garyizing existing schools. Mr. Meleney and Mr. Shallow were delegated by the Board to submit its views in opposition to the joint committee which prepared the final draft of that report. They reported that not the slightest attention was paid to their arguments or suggestions; that most of the proposals to Garyize schools emanated not from any educational source but from Mrs. Ford who represented the Comptroller's Office; and that every one of these proposals was voted through despite their protests. This procedure does not argue much success for your statement that "the Board of Superintendents is to have ample opportunity to pass upon the details of the expenditure of the new appropriation in advance of any definite commitments."

In the absence of official documents I do not venture to impugn the accuracy of this statement further than to say that it is in conflict with my recollection.

You conclude your letter by quoting a number of laudatory remarks made by principals on the duplicate school plan. Did it not strike you, Mr. President, that these remarks are in practically every instance only slight adaptations or paraphrases of phrases culled from the two or three prominent defenders of the Gary plan? I should greatly like to crossexamine the gentlemen who made these statements. Permit me, however, to quote a couple of sentences from a letter I received yesterday from one of our ablest women principals:

"After entering one of these free-for-all circuses called a duplicate school the children have little opportunity to learn anything exact. My own reading of the Buckingham results is that whatever they proved the children to know was learned in the regular schools, and that the difference in the marks was a measure of the pupils' deterioration in the turmoil of a Garyized study program." I venture to think that this is a more correct statement of the views of the great majority of our principals than the statements you quote.

To my mind nothing betrays the weakness of the Gary position more clearly than the manner in which its defenders have shifted the grounds of their defense, as these grounds became untenable or unpopular. When it was first proposed to introduce it into New York, the plea was that it presented wonderful opportunities for vocational training. When the hollowness of that plea was exposed through their plan's manifest failure to produce the desired results, its advocates shifted their ground to the plea that by the duplicate school plan they could save the city enormous sums of money by making old buildings accommodate double the number of children and thus avoiding the necessity of purchasing new sites and erecting new buildings. When it was perceived that the people continued to demand new buildings, its advocates

resorted to the plea which you use so forcibly—that by providing more workshops, laboratories, and playgrounds, larger opportunities for hand-training and eye-training would be afforded. And now you wonder why I, who have for years advocated the extension of such facilities, do not advocate the duplicate school plan which does in a measure provide them. In your letter, however, you absolutely misstate my position. You say: "You apparently fear that the too rapid extension of such facilities may have a deleterious effect upon the work of the schools in academic subjects." Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is not the extension of the facilities for hand and eye work that I fear may injure the work of the schools in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history, but it is the inherent weakness of the Gary or duplicate school plan itself. That inherent weakness is that the children who are not reciting in class are either being mentally bored and wearied in the auditorium or physically tired out in the gymnasium or playground and so rendered unfit for the ordinary work of the class room. Add to this the confusion of constant changing of large bodies of pupils from place to place, and you may faintly imagine how far a duplicate school is from that ideal of the "Calm air of delightful studies" which Milton fixed for all times in the minds of English-speaking peoples as the ideal home of mental training. Why, I have seen a duplicate school time schedule in which one of the higher grades did not have an opportunity to recite in any purely intellectual subject until after two o'clock in the afternoon and after the force of mind and the force of body had been worn out by uninteresting, time consuming occupations or incessant play. For, Sir, strange as it may seem, children do get bored by uninteresting things such as stupid auditorium exercises in which they have to sit still for an hour and do get wearied by an excessive amount of time given over to directed play. It is for this reason, not because they provide larger opportunities for hand work and eye work that I fear

the academic work is suffering, as it has been almost demonstrated it is, in the duplicate schools. Yet it is proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic and kindred branches, that the people, your masters and mine, demand from us. For precisely the same reason I fear that the hand and eye work, even with increased facilities and increased time, is suffering in the duplicate plan schools. There is already too much reason to fear that such is the case. I shall be better able, however, to speak with authority on this subject after I have concluded the investigation of the Garyized schools which the Board of Education has directed me to make.

It is just possible that if proper rest rooms and appliances were provided, the inherent weakness of the duplicate school plan might be at least partially removed; but so far is the great and manifest truth, that children require physical and mental rest quite as much as, or even more than, exercise, absent from the thought of present day so called school reformers, that none of them has ever offered the suggestion.

This letter is already too long but I cannot conclude without again expressing the hope that you will use your great influence to call a halt in the frenzied efforts of the present city administration to save money for other purposes by Garyizing existing schools and not erecting a sufficient number of new buildings—both high schools and elementary schools—to meet the demands of the people.

Very respectfully yours,

Wm. H. Maxwell,

Superintendent of Schools.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

July 20th, 1917

Dr. William H. Maxwell,
City Superintendent of Schools,
New York City.

My Dear Dr. Maxwell:

In replying to your letter of the 12th instant, I must first take serious exception to the character of this communication. It is neither fitting nor seemly that you, a subordinate of the Board of Education, should address such a letter to its President.

I do not propose to discuss the merits of the duplicate school plan from a personal standpoint, but I cannot permit you to take refuge in the personalities in which your latest letter abounds. Neither my opinion nor yours is important except as it affects the welfare of the children of the city; neither my opinion nor yours is entitled to carry much weight except as it is supported by fact and sound argument. You have no more right to characterize my views as "delusions" because you do not agree with them, than I have to apply the same epithet to your views. I hope we are both sincerely searching for truth and not merely trying to defend preconceived opinions. My mind is entirely open to consider facts and arguments, but the mere assertion of your unsupported opinions can hardly be expected to affect my judgment or conclusions.

If we are to continue the discussion, let us avoid personalities and deal with the matter on a basis of logical argument.

You recognize and admit the need for further school accommodations to abolish the evils of part time and double session, and you also recognize and admit the value and importance of providing playgrounds, gymnasiums, kitchens, auditoriums,

science laboratories, workshops and similar advantages for elementary school children.

That a given amount of money will provide such accommodations and advantages for a much larger number of children under the duplicate plan of organization than under the traditional plan, is a mere matter of figures which requires no argument. You claim, however, in substance that the disadvantages of the duplicate plan are so serious that the city should spend more than double the amount required to provide such accommodations and advantages under the duplicate plan, in order to continue the traditional plan of a reserved classroom seat for every pupil.

In such a contention the burden of proof rests upon you to show affirmatively that a plan which on its face promises such great economy for the city and at the same time such advantages for the school children, is so defective that it should not be adopted.

Your opposition to the duplicate plan, as I understand it, is based upon the assumption or fear that it will have an unfortunate effect upon education in academic subjects. When, however, I protest that you have produced no facts in support of your opposition, you specify the following:

First:— That "there are three localities in the Bronx so urgently in need of new elementary school accommodations that no amount of 'Garyizing' or 'duplicating' existing schools will satisfy the demands of the people".

Second:—"That school No. 54, Brooklyn, is an old building which should be replaced by a new building on a neighboring site purchased for that purpose".

Third:— "That Public School 140, Brooklyn, is a comparatively modern and well equipped and not over-crowded building and that to spend money to 'Garyize' that school is to divert funds which might be more profitably employed".

Fourth:—That the high schools are in urgent need of additional accommodation.

In making these statements you apparently overlook the following facts:

First:— That provision has already been made for two new buildings in the Bronx.

Second:—That provision has already been made for a new Public School 54, Brooklyn, on the site owned by the city between Nostrand Avenue and Sandford Street.

Third:— That while Public School 140, Brooklyn, is not overcrowded there are more than a thousand children on double session in Public School 118 which adjoins Public School 140.

Fourth:—That $1,300,000. has been appropriated during the past two years for increasing high school accommodations.

Surely you must yourself recognize, however, that even if your statements were accurate they are entirely irrelevant and have no possible bearing upon the principle of the duplicate school; they merely involve issues of opinion and judgment as to its application. Even with the duplicate plan of organization, we must of course continue to build new buildings, to discard old buildings and to provide increased accommodation for high schools. If you admit that you have produced no other facts than these upon which to base your opposition, you fully justify my criticism of your argument in this respect.

I do not think that the Board of Superintendents is opposed to the principle of the duplicate school; on the contrary, I believe that a majority, if not all of the Associate Superintendents approve and believe in a duplicate plan of organization. Naturally there are differences of opinion in regard to the details of the application of the principle and in regard to the relative needs of various sections of the city. Mr. Meleney told me emphatically in connection with the last appropriation made by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, that he did not wish to be considered in opposition to the duplicate plan but only in regard to

some items of the proposed program for the expenditure of this appropriation, and that he was entirely willing to approve the general plan with the understanding that criticisms and suggestions of the Board of Superintendents in regard to certain specific features should receive subsequent consideration. This I believe fairly represents the view of the Board of Superintendents.

I have before me a copy of the recommendations of the Board of Superintendents in connection with plans for the new public school 135, Brooklyn. These recommendations include an auditorium, gymnasium, two boys' shops, one domestic science room, one sewing room, one music room, one study room, two kindergarten rooms, one ungraded classroom, one open-air classroom, one science room, one nature study classroom, one drawing room and thirty regular classrooms. There is no difference of opinion as to the importance of such advantages as are thus recommended. The fundamental question at issue is whether such a school should be used for only thirty classes, half of the school plant remaining vacant while the other half is occupied, or whether all departments of the school should be used during the entire school day.

I am interested in your suggestion that we in New York may be able to improve upon the Gary plan of duplicate organization. As I have repeatedly stated, the Board of Education is not attempting to impose any hard and fast form of organization for the duplicate schools. It is merely providing increased accommodations and advantages and asking that the schools be so organized and administered that all of these opportunities shall be used during the entire school day. It will gladly welcome any improvements of the Gary plan of organization.

There was nothing private about the conversation in which you stated to me that the results of the Washington Irving High School were a "tragedy". On the contrary, I considered it merely an expression of your well understood attitude toward that

school under its former management. I called attention to the incident for the reason that at the time you made this remark the Washington Irving High School was the best example in New York of a duplicate school. The criticisms which you made of the results of that school a few years ago were founded, I believe, on the same basis as the criticism which you now make of the so-called Gary schools. The fact that the Washington Irving School has made good and is now generally recognized as one of the very finest schools in the city, is certainly a strong argument in support of the duplicate school principle and affords good reason to hope that your fears for the results of the duplicate elementary schools will prove as unfounded as were your fears for the results of the Washington Irving High School.

Permit me to add that your statement that if the Washington Irving High School "no longer enjoys the melancholy distinction it had attained for several years in being recorded as the high school deserted by the largest number of its students each year before graduating, it is because of the changes wrought by its present principal" does not seem to be borne out by the figures contained in your own annual reports. An inspection of these documents for the years 1905-1914 inclusive (statistics of this nature being available for the first time in 1905 and 1914 marking the end of the administration of the principal you criticize), discloses not a single year in which the Washington Irving had the highest percentage of pupils leaving school without graduation. For the year 1914, (the last year before the change of principal) your report, page 99, shows the following percentages of pupils leaving the various high schools of the city without graduation:

Julia Richman	66%
Evander Childs	52%
Commerce	39%
Richmond Hill	38%
Bushwick	35%
Manual Training	34%

DeWitt Clinton	34%
Commercial	33%
Far Rockaway	30%
Bay Ridge	28%
Jamaica	28%
Bryant	28%
Curtis	27%
Wadleigh	26%
Flushing	26%
Eastern District	24%
Stuyvesant	24%
Morris	23%
Washington Irving	23%

In spite of all your opposition the school became so popular that the number of pupils increased out of all proportion to the increase in population of that section of the city, as will appear from the following figures:

1903	1725	students	
1904	2184	"	
1905	2125	"	
1906	2058	"	
1907	2059	"	
1908	2408	"	
1909	3080	"	
1910	3736	"	
1911	4447	"	
1912	5248	"	
1913	5873	"	(1337 transferred out as nucleus of a new high school)
1914	5657	"	

In 1914, as you will remember, the ratings of ten Washington Irving graduates selected alphabetically from each of the four classes of the Training School for Teachers, were compared with the ratings of a similar group of forty graduates of other high schools of the city with the following results:

Total ratings above B in any subject—
Washington Irving High School.....80
Other schools.....70

Total ratings below B in any subject—
Washington Irving High School.....14
Other schools.....26

On June 15, 1914, Mr. Hendrick, Acting Principal of the Training School, wrote:

> "By our teachers the Washington Irving graduates are ranked with the best in industry, response, initiative, reliability, independent work and promise of successful teaching. I have especially noted the facility with which the Washington Irving girls do things. I congratulate their high school teachers on the success of their training."

On October 23d of the same year, the Principal of the Training School reported that—

> "Washington Irving High School girls are well prepared, possess initiative not generally shown by other students and are exceptionally well qualified."

You will note that all of these records refer to results during the period of "melancholy distinction" under the former management.

I fully share your solicitude for proficiency in reading, writing, arithmetic and kindred branches. I am mortified to find how much basis there is for the wide-spread criticism of the results achieved by the traditional schools in these directions. I have just received a letter from the Vice President of an important industrial corporation who states that "there were received in the accounting department of this company during the six months ended June 30th this year, 193 applications from public school graduates and that of this number 95 were rejected principally because of poor penmanship and inability to perform simple arithmetical problems". I have also received from one of the

leading banks of the city, the following report of a spelling test given a first year high school boy who applied for a position in that bank:—"releave, deceive, believe, sive, infimation, retrubition, constonation". "Now is a profishous time for you to consurve your resosous".

It was on the strength of a large mass of such testimony as this that the Committee on Commercial Education of the Chamber of Commerce reported a wide-spread opinion that a large proportion of public school graduates "are deficient in practical working knowledge of fundamental subjects such as reading, writing, spelling and grammatical construction of the English language, arithmetic and geography; that their education consists largely of a smattering of superficial knowledge without the power of clear definite thought and expression and that they lack appreciation of the importance of thoroughness, exactness, earnestness and perseverance".

If the academic results of the traditional schools were satisfactory there would be some justification for your apprehension, but these results are so unsatisfactory that the traditional schools themselves are on the defensive today and there is less danger therefore of deterioration and greater possibility of improvement as the result of such changes as are introduced under the duplicate plan.

In your last letter you describe what you call the inherent weakness of the Gary or duplicate school plan as follows: "That inherent weakness is that the children who are not reciting in class are either being mentally bored and wearied in the auditorium or physically tired out in the gymnasium or playground, and so rendered unfit for the ordinary work of the classroom". If you really fear such a result from auditorium exercises and physical training, your experience with children must have been far different from mine. I believe, on the contrary, that such variety in their school activities is an inherent advantage of the duplicate plan which adds increased interest and zest to their

entire school work. If the auditorium period is not interesting and stimulating the fault lies with the teaching and not with the system. It is hardly worth while, however, to discuss imaginary results, for in addition to the testimony already sent you from principals who have actually tried the duplicate plan in our New York schools, we have also the following statements from neighboring cities:

The President of the Board of Education of Troy states:

> "We have tried the Gary plan here for two and one-half years, and are absolutely and unqualifiedly for it. The Board were unanimous on the question. The plan has done wonders for our community. It has given our children a richer programme of school opportunities".

And the Superintendent adds:

> "We have recommended the Gary plan, not as an economy measure but as giving the children a richer school life. The children have done better in Regents examinations than under the old plan".

From the Superintendent in Newark comes the report:

> "Our experiment with this plan has proven highly satisfactory. We started a year and half ago with one school, added two within the year, and have just approved by the Board of Education an appropriation for Garyizing four more of our existing elementary schools".
>
> "The spirit of the teachers and children is splendid; they are more interested in education than ever before".
>
> "The teachers like the plan, the children are delighted with it, and the parents approve it after they know what it is".

Reports from Pittsburg are equally enthusiastic:

> "The children show better results than they did under the old plan".
>
> "The children are not so badly bored by monotony, and teachers working on specialties are fresher, more interested and less tiring".
>
> "I am in charge of two schools, one on the duplicate plan and the other on the old plan. The old line school is of the lower

> grades, and promotes into the duplicate school. We thus have in our yearly classes children who come from the duplicate school and from the old line school. The teacher remarks a greater power and independence, thinking ability and initiative possessed by the children of the duplicate school. The new plan is very much better for the younger children; they are less restless and fidgety".

In opposition to such testimony as this, in opposition to the almost unanimous opinion of the principals of the twenty-three duplicate schools in New York and of the Superintendents most closely in touch with their work, in opposition to the judgment of a large majority of the members of the Board of Education who have been studying the problem during the past three years, and notwithstanding your very imperfect knowledge of what has occurred during your prolonged absence, and without, I believe, ever having visited one of our duplicate schools since your return, you ask me to accept your individual opinion supported by neither evidence nor arguments which could be seriously entertained by any impartial judge.

You are in error in stating that the Board of Education has directed you to make an investigation of the duplicate schools. The Board would welcome any fair and impartial investigation, but in announcing your judgment in advance you have obviously disqualified yourself to command confidence in the fairness or impartiality of any investigation conducted by you. You of course have power under the law to make such investigation on your own initiative, and I hope that you will take such steps as are necessary to inform yourself thoroughly in regard to the whole situation with the object not of justifying your own position, but of ascertaining actual conditions and plans. Until you have done this, I see no object in continuing the discussion, but after you have thus familiarized yourself with the subject, I shall be glad to give careful consideration to any recommendations from you for the modification of our proposed program.

In the meantime let me remind you that the Board of Educa-

tion has definitely adopted the policy of a duplicate plan of school organization, and expects the loyal co-operation of all of its employees in carrying out this policy.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,

President of the Board of Education.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

1st August, 1917

DEAR SIR:

In your letter of 20th July, answering my letter of 12th July, you write as follows: "It is neither fitting nor seemly that you, a subordinate of the Board of Education, should address such a letter to its President."

On reading over my letter of 12th July, I beg leave to say that I find nothing in it to retract, except the statement that the Board of Education had directed the Superintendent of Schools to investigate the work of the duplicate schools. My error was due to the confusion attending a meeting of the Board of Education, when Commissioner Keller had his resolution to that effect laid over, when I supposed it had been passed.

As to whether my letter of 12th July, written to disabuse your mind of certain opinions, since you object to the word "delusions", contains matter that is unseemly, I leave it to a discerning public to determine. To enable the public to reach a just decision, it is pertinent to state that, in this controversy, you are the aggressor. I had written a letter to Governor Whitman, asking him to veto the bill changing the educational system of New York City, among other things reducing the Board of Education from forty-six to seven members. You saw fit to write me a letter criticising my argument to the Governor. Naturally, I replied. Surely it is the part of him who makes the attack to "play the game" and not to attempt to wrap himself in an armor of official dignity against which he calls it "unfitting" and "unseemly" to use the time-honored weapons of controversy. You will permit me to inform you, however, Sir, that your fears, as far as I am concerned, are groundless. No one can impair the dignity of the President of the Board of Education except the incumbent of that high office.

As to the other matters embraced in your letter, I find some statements that require comment. You say, for instance: "In such a contention the burden of proof rests upon you (me) to show affirmatively that a plan which, on its face, promises such great economy for the city and at the same time such advantages for the school children, is so defective that it should not be adopted." According to this theory, we should adopt any plan of education that "promises" to cost less and do more for the school children, and set aside in its favor the established order of school-keeping and school teaching. Probably since the days of De Witt Clinton, no responsible school officer ever made a more dangerous or misleading statement. To cost less and to do more is the cry of every promoter of a quack nostrum in finance and in medicine, as well as in education. It was such arguments as this that sustained the tremendous greenback heresy and the tremendous silver heresy which came near to overthrowing for a time the financial soundness of our country. In De Witt Clinton's days there was a sample of a cost-less and do-more nostrum in education that should have served as a warning to New York for all future generations. Because, as he argued, it would cost less and do more, he induced the Public School Society of New York, in 1805, to adopt the Lancasterian System of public education. The evil effects of that cheap and inefficient system marked the schools of New York for three-quarters of a century. Indeed, they are not yet entirely obliterated. I would suggest, Sir, that you read carefully the educational speeches of De Witt Clinton and study their consequences, before you strive to emulate his memorable educational reputation by championing the "adoption" of a scheme of public teaching that has as yet, so far as New York City is concerned, nothing to recommend it but the claims of its advocates that it will "cost less" and "do more."

On the other hand, I stand by the doctrine that the established order of public education, notwithstanding many failings, has behind it a noble record, has steadily raised the level of human

intelligence and efficiency, is not only the melting-pot of the races that flock to us from all parts of the globe, but is our strongest bulwark against corruption, disloyalty, and disorder. Standing on this platform, I take the ground that every new theory of education must be fully tried and tested before being adopted. That is what I advised the Board of Education to do with regard to the Gary school plan—experiment with it fully and under the most favorable conditions, test it thoroughly, and adopt it only if it makes good the claims of its advocates. In the meantime, the burden of proof that it costs less and does more, evidently rests, not upon the supporters of the established order, but upon the advocates of the innovation.

You then proceed: "Your opposition to the duplicate plan, as I understand it, is based upon the assumption or fear that it will have an unfortunate effect upon education in academic subjects. When, however, I protest that you have produced no facts in support of your opposition, you specify the following". (You then enumerate certain school buildings which I have claimed should be erected before further attempts are made to extend the Gary experiment.) Is not this an attempt to escape your opponent's argument by shifting your position? I brought forward the facts in question not, as you now say, in opposition to the Gary plan, but in reply to the following statement found in your letter of 9th July: "Neither in your letter to Governor Whitman nor in your correspondence with me have you produced a single fact or a single definite concrete argument in support of your opposition *to the extension of the advantages*", etc. My contention was addressed to showing (1) that I had produced facts, and (2) that I had produced a valid argument, not against the adoption, but against the extension of the Gary experiment. My argument against the extension of an experiment you now try to set aside by asserting that it was an argument in opposition to the duplicate school plan *in se*. Is this quite fair, Mr. President?

With regard to your criticism of the facts I cited, I have the following remarks to make:

First: In the three localities in The Bronx, to which I referred, school buildings are urgently needed, in addition to the two buildings for which you say provision has already been made.

Second: If provision has been made for a new building for Public School 54, Brooklyn, money should not be expended for Garyizing Public School 157, Brooklyn.

Third: Public School 118, Brooklyn, should not be spoiled as a school for girls in order to accommodate boys who are already receiving full-time instruction in a neighboring school.

Fourth: The provision which you claim has been made "for increasing high school accommodations—$1,300,000 appropriated during the past two years", and, I would add, very little of it spent—is utterly inadequate. By the way, that amount included an item of a quarter of a million dollars to be expended in converting an old elementary building into a high school for the Julia Richman High School,—one of the most absurd and extravagant propositions that ever emanated from the Comptroller's office, (so I am informed)—which has since been abandoned.

I still claim that to attempt to teach nearly 70,000 high school students in less than 40,000 sittings is a disgrace to the metropolis of America and does a great wrong to successive generations of students.

I have never claimed that these facts have any "bearing upon the principle of the duplicate school." I have claimed and do claim that they are more necessary than to spend the people's money in extending a doubtful experiment.

You continue: "I do not think that the Board of Superintendents is opposed to the principle of the duplicate school; on the contrary, I believe that a majority, if not all, of the Associate Superintendents, approve and believe in a duplicate plan of organization."

In making this assertion, you seem to ignore the fact that, on 25th April, 1916, the Board of Superintendents adopted a resolution stating that "It is not committed to a duplicate plan as the best form of school organization." "The fundamental question at issue is," you state, "whether such a school should be used for only thirty classes (referring to one of the plans of which you have spoken), half of the school plant remaining vacant while the other half is occupied, or whether all departments of the school should be used during the entire school day." You state what is clearly an impossible case. In no school building is a plant used for only thirty classes, half the school plant remaining vacant while the other half is occupied. Whatever else may be, that is certainly not the question involved.

You speak of my "opposition" to the Washington Irving High School. In this statement you are again mistaken. I suggested and devised the school. From the start, I did everything in my power to promote its best interests. I challenge you to produce any act of mine that can honestly be construed as opposition to the school.

I regret to find that I must again refresh your memory in quoting from what I must still regard as a "private" conversation about the Washington Irving High School. I never said that "the results of that school were a tragedy." I did use words to the effect that the history of the school was marked all along by the tragedies of young women who had found their high hopes in life blighted because the school had not fulfilled what its former principal promised.

You expend great effort in trying to refute my statement that the school had, for many years, enjoyed the "melancholy distinction" of being recorded during many years "as the high school deserted by the largest number of its students each year before graduating." The statement you have expended so much labor to refute is not the statement which I made.

I am amazed to find that you, as President of the Board of

Education, make a wholesale onslaught on the work of the public schools, founded upon no better evidence than "a letter from the vice-president of an important industrial corporation" and "a report" "received from one of the leading banks", regarding a spelling test given to a single boy. Edmund Burke well said that one cannot frame an indictment against a nation. No more can you frame, on such evidence, an indictment against the largest single public school system in the world. Small politicians and disappointed business-men have occasionally tried their hands at framing such an indictment, only to excite the scorn of experienced teachers and the ridicule of the great mass of well satisfied parents. For myself, I do not consider it necessary at the present time to enter into any elaborate defense of the public schools. They are good schools and there is abundant evidence that parents are well satisfied with them. They would be still better schools and cause much greater satisfaction if the Board of Estimate and Apportionment would give the money to build new school buildings when such buildings are needed, and afford such accommodations as would enable us to reduce to reasonable proportions the oversized classes that obstruct the progress of pupils and break the health and the hearts of numbers of conscientious teachers.

You say that, in opposition "to the judgment of a large majority of the members of the Board of Education" and in opposition to the "unanimous opinion" of certain principals, teachers, and superintendents who have tried the Gary plan "you ask me (you) to accept your individual opinion supported by neither evidence nor arguments which could be seriously entertained by any impartial judge."

In the first place, I have good reason to believe that you have been misled by your advisers as to the unanimity of opinion in favor of the Gary plan among those who have tried it, either inside or outside of this city.

In the second place, you quote the favorable opinions of other

superintendents in other cities where the Gary plan is being tried. There is no evidence that these opinions are founded on sufficient trial and careful investigation.

In the third place, you have quoted nothing from the school officers in the cities where the Gary plan has been tried, found wanting, and rejected.

As a comment upon your statement that my letters present neither evidence nor arguments, I beg leave to reiterate the reasons why I am strongly of opinion that the Gary innovation should not be carried farther until it has demonstrated that it will not injure our children:

1. The Gary or duplicate school plan is very similar to, though more elaborate than the double-sessions plan which we have been forced to adopt for several years in this city, because of lack of sufficient accommodations. Practically all of our high schools are now double-session schools. In the State examinations which all our high schools, except, in part, the commercial high schools, are required to take, we have periodically recurring tests of progress or retrogression. In, I believe, every instance in which double sessions are found in a high school, the school began to show deterioration as soon as the double sessions were introduced. This statement is as true of the strongest of our high schools as of the comparatively weak. We may reasonably argue from analogy that the introduction of the duplicate school plan—not different in principle from the double-session plan—will have a similar injurious effect on the fundamental studies in an elementary school.

2. A most careful and scientific investigation made under my direction in 1915 showed (1) that, in the so-called Gary schools, the pupils did not make as rapid progress in the fundamental studies as in an equal number of the traditional schools; (2) that the number of over-age children

increases more rapidly in the Gary schools than in the traditional schools; (3) that the children leave school more frequently from the higher grades in the Gary schools than in the traditional schools; and (4) that it costs the city more to educate a child in a Gary or duplicate school than in a traditional school.

3. The results of the investigation of 1915 were confirmed and supported by a separate and independent examination made by a committee of district superintendents in 1916.

4. Progress in the fundamental branches, which I regard as reading, writing, grammar, penmanship, drawing, history and government, and geography, is the supreme test of every elementary school. Other matters are important; these are essential.

5. As I pointed out in my last letter, under the Gary plan pupils frequently come to their class work when bored by tedious auditorium exercises or tired physically by directed play.

As you well know, I do not regard these considerations as conclusive, because the Gary innovation has not been sufficiently long on trial. They raise, however, a strong presumption against the innovation and are certainly sufficient to call a halt on extending the experiment until we know its effects better.

In the conclusion of your letter you say: "In announcing your judgment in advance, you have obviously disqualified yourself to command confidence in the fairness or impartiality of any investigation conducted by you." The most charitable view of this assertion is that it was written, not by you, but by one of your numerous advisers and accepted by you without sufficient consideration. As you have issued it over your signature, however,

I have no choice but to regard it as yours. You know that I have not pronounced final judgment against the duplicate school plan.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. MAXWELL,

Superintendent of Schools.

HON. WILLIAM G. WILLCOX,

President of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

August 8th, 1917

Dr. William H. Maxwell,
Superintendent of Schools,
New York.

Dear Sir:

In acknowledging your letter of the 1st instant, permit me to say that you apparently misunderstand my criticism of the tone of your former communication. Far from wrapping myself in "an armor of official dignity", I invite and welcome frank criticism when supported by reasonable argument, but your attempt to discredit my statements by reflections upon my personal qualifications and judgment was considered by members of the Board disrespectful not only to the office which I hold, but also to the Board of Education.

With reference to the resolution adopted by the Board of Superintendents April 25th, 1916, to which you refer, I call your attention to my letter of May 2nd, 1916, to the Board of Superintendents, and Dr. Straubenmuller's reply addressed to me three days later, reading as follows:

> "Referring to your letter dated May 2, 1916, relative to a duplicate school plan, which was read and discussed at a meeting of the Board of Superintendents held on May 2, I take pleasure in notifying you that the views expressed by you in this letter coincide with the views of the Board of Superintendents".

I find nothing else in your letter of sufficient importance to call for any further comment.

Very truly yours,
William G. Willcox,
President of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
500 PARK AVENUE

May 2, 1916

To the Board of Superintendents,
Gentlemen:

Referring to your communication to the Board of Education under date of April 25th, I quite understand, and I believe that the other members of the Board understand, that the Board of Superintendents "is not committed to a duplicate school plan as the best form of school organization. As pointed out by Dr. Maxwell in his recent report, however, the duplicate organization is by no means a new thing in New York, nearly 100,000 of the children in the elementary schools being registered on September 30, 1915, in double organization classes.

This plan has been adopted in congested districts in the past, not as an ideal plan, but as the best possible arrangement under existing conditions. It has been adopted under great disadvantages, however, in many schools owing to the lack of adequate facilities for providing valuable activities for the pupils while not engaged in the classrooms.

The importance of workshops, auditoriums, gymnasiums, science laboratories and playgrounds in any form of double organization school cannot be questioned. Indeed, the value of such facilities in any school is now so generally recognized that it will probably be conceded that a well organized duplicate school with these advantages is a better school than a single organization which lacks such advantages.

Since there is no possible prospect in New York City of enough new buildings to relieve the congested districts without continuing and extending some form of double organization, there appears to be no room for any difference of opinion as to the wisdom of adapting these congested schools to the best possible

form of double organization by providing suitable and profitable accommodation and occupation for the pupils who are not occupied in the classrooms.

It is upon this theory that the Board of Education is proposing such physical alterations and additions as shall fit these congested schools for the best possible form of double organization. In proposing such physical changes, however, the Board of Education is not committing itself in regard to the form of duplicate organization or administration to be adopted; on the contrary, it is entirely free to approve and adopt such form of organization as the Board of Superintendents shall find best adapted to the needs and conditions of New York.

Am I not correct in thinking that the Board of Superintendents is entirely in accord with these views and this programme?

Yours very truly,

William G. Willcox,
President, Board of Education.

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